

## **NEWS RELEASE**

#### U.S. Air Forces Central Command Public Affairs

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#### **Combined Forces Air Component Command Airpower Statistics**

Highlighted Decisive Airpower article: Afghan Air Force pins wings on first fixed-wing class grads by Capt. Agneta Murnan 438th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

### 10/19/2012 - SHINDAND, AFGHANISTAN --

Three Afghan Air Force pilot trainees became not only the first fixed-wing students to earn their wings in Afghanistan after 30 years -- on Oct. 15, they became the first pilots to complete the entire fixed-wing program entirely in Afghanistan since the beginning of the NATO air training mission for Afghanistan in 2007.

Through phases of English classes, Initial Flight Screening, countless hours of study, solo sorties, and carefully tracked flight time in the Cessna 182 and Cessna 208 at Shindand Air Base, AAF 1st Lts. Walid Noori, Emal Azizi and Khan Agha Ghaznavi have been writing pages in a chapter of AAF history.

The graduation took place in western Afghanistan in the wing headquarters of Shindand Air Base, hosting student pilots, mentors, instructors and base leadership from the AAF and Coalition team.



Newly graduated Afghan Air Force pilots, 1st Lt.'s Walid Noori, Emal Azizi, and Khan Agha Ghaznavi, pose for a group photo after their ceremony Oct. 15, 2012 in the wing headquarters at Shindand Air Base, Afghanistan. The lieutenants became the first fixed-wing undergraduate pilot trainees to earn their wings in Afghanistan after more than 30 years, completing the entire fixed-wing program entirely in Afghanistan. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Quinton Russ)

The pilots received their wings from AAF Maj. Gen. Mohammad Baqi, Shindand Air Wing commander; U.S. Air Force Col. David Gossett, 838th Air Expeditionary Advisory Group commander; and AAF Col. Hashem, Shindand Air Wing Training Group commander.

"Training and education. Training and education," said Baqi, an AAF veteran since 1973 and a pilot himself. "I've always spoken about these things as my personal message and focus."

The trio began IFS in December 2011, and worked through their course of study, including more than 250 hours in the simulator and the C-182 and C-208 aircraft. Various Coalition military and civilian instructors partnered to transition this first class through the phases of training.

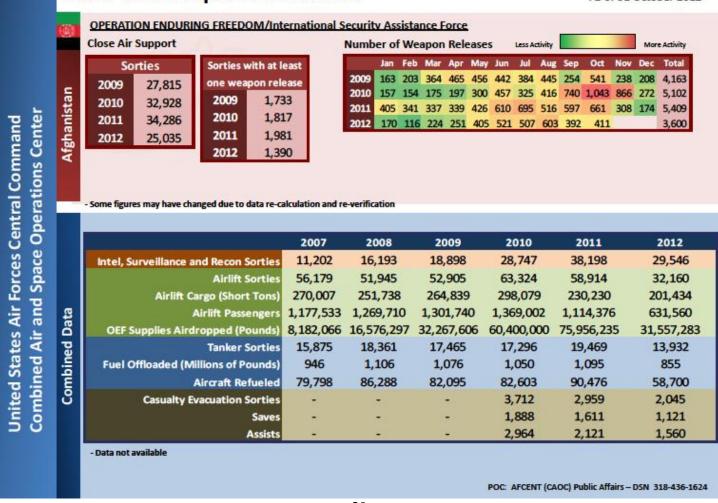
"By no means has the road traveled been easy for these young men," Gossett explained. "To our graduates: make no mistake, the road you continue on will present challenges. However I am confident that you will step up and look for the opportunities in the challenges you face. Realize you are not alone. For the full article or to download high resolution photographs, visit:

http://www.afcent.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123322763

# Combined Forces Air Component Commander 2007-2012 Airpower Statistics

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